

Elections were lively events, hotly contested, as numerous surviving graffiti on the walls of Pompeii make clear. Two of these are included in the Latin story. Here are two more: the first shows the guild system at work in a rather comic way!

- The guild of Late Drinkers unanimously supports Marcus Cerrinius Vatia as aedile.
- Statia and Petronia ask for your support for Marcus Casellius and Lucius Albucius as aediles. I hope we have citizens like this in our colony for ever.

A letter survives in which Quintus Cicero advises his brother Marcus – who is soon to feature in our story – on how to conduct his election campaign. Here is some of what he says:

A campaign for election to a magistracy can be divided into two kinds of activity: firstly to gain the support of one's friends, secondly to win the good will of the people. The support of one's friends should be secured by kindness done and repaid, by long-standing acquaintance and by a charming and friendly nature. But the word 'friend' has a wider application in an election campaign than in the rest of life. Anyone who shows any sympathy towards you, who pays attention to you, who frequents your house, should be reckoned among your 'friends'... It is necessary to have friends of every kind: for the sake of appearance, make friends with men who are distinguished in rank and title. These, though they may not actively support the campaign, none the less confer some prestige upon the candidate... You should have knowledge of people's names, winning manners, persistence, generosity, reputation and confidence in your public program... You badly need to use flattery, which, though disgraceful in the rest of one's life, is essential while electioneering... All men naturally prefer you to lie to them than to refuse your aid... To make a promise is not definite; it allows postponement, and affects only a few people.